

ments of this crime bill. To let special interests use parliamentary maneuvers to undermine what is clearly the will of the majority of the American people and a majority of the Congress on each discreet element is a bad mistake, and I don't think the people will forget about it.

Q. Mr. President—

Q. Mr. President—

The President. One at a time. One at a time. Wolf [Wolf Blitzer, Cable News Network].

Q. Mr. President, on the issue of the specific complaints that the opposition made, that there was too much money—pork, if you will, they claim—on crime prevention and the ban on 19 kinds of assault weapons, are you prepared to compromise on those two points, the crime prevention programs and the gun control, in order to get the more prisons, the 100,000 police, and everything else you want?

The President. First of all, I believe that all of these elements can pass, and I believe that they will. Let's wait and see what they have to say. There were—let me say again—there were 11 votes, Republican votes, for this rule today. There were 38 Republican votes for the assault weapons ban. There were 65 Republican votes for the crime bill with about the same dollars' worth of prevention programs we had. So I don't see how, when we're spending two-thirds of the money in this bill on prisons, police, and punishment, we can possibly walk away when we've got the toughest punishment that any Federal bill ever had—"three strikes and you're out," tougher penalties for serious offenders, tougher penalties for serious juvenile offenders—how we can walk away from the pre-

vention programs when the police have told us that that's what we have to do?

Q. What's your response to those who will say that this is an enormous personal defeat for you?

The President. I can say that I worked my heart out on it, and I did everything I could. And on this day, the NRA and the Republican leadership had their way. The American people have to decide whether they think this is about which politicians are winning and losing in Washington or about kids like James Darby and Polly Klaas who are still alive.

I believe the American people will not like viewing this as some sort of political circus up here. I'm on their side, and I think we better see who's on what side. That is the only thing that matters, what happens to the American people.

Did I lose tonight? You bet I did in the sense that I wanted it to pass. But what happens to me is not important. If everybody in America had the security I had, we wouldn't need a crime bill.

Look at—what happens to me is not it. What matters is all these kids that are going to be out on the street tonight that could just get shot. That's what's important. And I think that in the end if that is felt in the heart of the Members of the House, we'll still get this crime bill.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:15 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House.

Remarks on Anticrime Legislation August 12, 1994

Ladies and gentlemen, last night when 225 Members of Congress voted with the NRA and the Republican congressional leadership, under enormous pressure, they decided that their political security was more important than the personal security of the American people. They said no to 100,000 police on the street, no to getting guns and kids off the street, no to protecting our police forces and our citizens against gangs with assault weapons, no to giving our kids some things to say yes to as well as something to

say no to, no to "three strikes and you're out" and the toughest punishment laws ever passed by the United States Congress.

We are going out now, the Cabinet, mayors of both parties, citizens of both parties all across this country, to say that this crime bill cannot die. Congress has an obligation to the American people that goes way beyond politics and way beyond party. The American people have said over and over this is their first concern. If we can't meet this concern, there is something

badly wrong in Washington. And we are going today, starting now, to the National Association of Police Officers conference to carry this battle back. We are going to fight and fight and fight until we win this battle for the American people.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:12 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for Minneapolis, MN.

Remarks to the National Association of Police Organizations in Minneapolis, Minnesota *August 12, 1994*

Thank you. Thank you very much, Sergeant Ganley, for your introduction and for your life of commitment. I'm glad to be here again with Mayor Sayles Belton and Mayor Coleman in the Twin Cities area. I want to thank Senator Wellstone and Congressman Vento for flying home with me. And I want to thank Congressman Vento along with Tim Penny, David Minge, Martin Sabo, Jim Oberstar, and Jim Ramstad for voting for safer streets and a brighter future last night in the United States House. I want to thank Tom Scotto and my longtime friend Bob Scully and the other members of NAPO, Dennis Flaherty and others, for their support for all the elements of this crime bill. And I'd like to thank especially the two mayors who flew here with me today, one a Republican, one a Democrat, both former prosecutors, people who believe in the promise of our country and our future and understand that unless we do something about crime we're never going to fulfill it. Ed Rendell and Rudolph Giuliani represent what this country ought to be about, people belonging to the political party of their choice but when the time comes putting party aside and putting people first. And I thank them, and I wish we had more like them, in the United States Congress.

Now folks, you all know what happened last night. The House of Representatives tried to take the easy way out, tried to walk away from the crime bill. Because of organized, intense, and highly political pressure, a majority walked away, away from the police patrolling our streets, away from the children and the senior citizens afraid to walk on those streets, away from all the hard-working middle class Americans who were not organized into any group but who have told us over and over again that

crime is their first concern and pleaded with us to do something about it.

The people of Minneapolis know that taking the easy way out is no longer an option. Two years ago next month, Officer Jerry Haaf was shot in the back in a restaurant by gang members. Today his wife, Marilyn, their two children, and their two grandchildren and one son-in-law came to be with me and to meet with me. I'd like to ask them to stand up and be recognized. *[Applause]* Their husband, father, grandfather gave everything he had to the Minneapolis police force for 30 years, and he and his family deserve better than what they got from the House of Representatives last night.

You know, we had a wonderful visit in there. It never occurred to me or to Mayor Giuliani or to Mayor Rendell or to Congressman Vento or Senator Wellstone, who were in there visiting with his family, to ask them whether they were Republicans or Democrats or independents. I don't have a clue. And I don't care. They're entitled to better than they got from the House of Representatives last night.

Every day, the police of this country, including those in this wonderful national organization who are convening here, put on uniforms and badges and walk on streets, into problems, risking their lives to serve people they're sworn to protect. They don't run from their responsibilities. They don't hide behind tricks. And they don't walk away from their folks. If they did, think what would happen to the United States.

That's why the walk-away last night in Congress is so disturbing. The first responsibility of government is law and order. Without that, freedom can never really be fully alive. Without that, people can never really fully pursue the American dream.